

Original Article

Fear of Cancer Recurrence and its Predictive Factors among Iranian Cancer Patients

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ABSTRACT

Context: Fear of cancer recurrence (FOCR) is one of the most important psychological problems among cancer patients. In extensive review of related literature there were no articles on FOCR among Iranian cancer patients.

Aim: The aim of present study was to investigation FOCR and its predictive factors among Iranian cancer patients.

Materials and Methods: In this descriptive-correlational study 129 cancer patients participated. For data collection, the demographic checklist and short form of fear of progression questionnaire was used. Logistic regression was used to determine predictive factors of FOCR.

Result: Mean score of FOCR among participants was 44.8 and about 50% of them had high level of FOCR. The most important worries of participants were about their family and the future of their children and their lesser worries were about the physical symptoms and fear of physical damage because of cancer treatments. Also, women, breast cancer patient, and patients with lower level of education have more FOCR.

Discussion: There is immediate need for supportive care program designed for Iranian cancer patients aimed at decreasing their FOCR. Especially, breast cancer patients and the patient with low educational level need more attention.

Key words: Cancer, Cancer recurrence, Fear of progress, Fear of recurrence, Iran

INTRODUCTION

Notable progressions in treating different types of cancers occurred in recent years and as a result, the prognosis of many cancers has improved.^[1-3] However, the diagnosis and the treatment of cancer still initiate a lot of stress in cancer patients and their families.^[4-6] Therefore, in many culture, the diagnosis of cancer can be considered equivalent to death and severe disability.^[6]

One of main stress that many cancer patients may experience during the active phases of cancer treatment^[7] or in their survivorship period^[8,9] is the fear of cancer recurrence (FOCR). FOCR can be defined as a fear or anxiety of cancer recurrence in primary location or its metastasis in other organs.^[10] The result of previous studies showed that even the FOCR may decrease after the active phase of the treatment, but this fear continues in many cancer patients for many years.^[11,12] In fact, FOCR is one of the most sever distress that many cancer patients may experience during their disease journey.^[13,14]

The results of some studies in England,^[10] Australia^[15-18] and Hong-Kong^[19] showed that cancer patients considered FOCR as one of their most frequent

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